

**Training in Fundraising and Marketing for
Action Research in Urban Agriculture in LAC
Workshop held Nov. 10-13, Lima, Peru.**

**Assessment Report for CFP Program Initiative
by L. Burley, PBDD - June, 2004.**

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Introduction

This report presents evaluation results from workshop participants, and at times incorporates assessments from the key people involved in workshop planning and delivery, who were:

- Norma Galafassi, Consultant who delivered the workshop;
- Jorge Price, Executive Director, IPES and Mario Gonzalo, AGUILA Network Coordinator;
- Kristina Taboulchanas, CFP Officer, workshop co-planner;
- Lisa Burley, PBDD workshop co-planner and evaluator.

The first part of the report may serve as a tool to better gauge the effectiveness of the workshop. The second part compares front end planning with the overall flow and content of the workshop, and other observations, which may serve as inputs for planning future events of this nature. Another document key to obtaining a full picture of the undertaking is the Nov., 2003 Trip Report by Kristina Taboulchanas.

The actual, daily evaluation surveys were formulated to benefit participants and workshop designers. Questions were directly linked to the objectives and sessions of each day, and required participants to reflect upon what they had understood or learned, and their ideas for the practical application of this new learning.

Qualifiers:

- all evaluations were in Spanish, nuances may have been lost in translation;
- on the most part, the report synthesizes participant comments, rather than providing direct quotes and therefore may reflect the bias of the author. All original comments in Spanish are available upon request from Lisa Burley.
- all evaluations were signed; one participant pointed out that anonymity may have generated more candid opinions.

Participant Profiles

Network members applied to participate in the workshop through a competitive process. Selected participants filled out a needs assessment and results were used to structure workshop content. Both the application process and assessment results provided a profile of workshop participants; for further qualification, please refer directly to the analysis of needs assessment results, available from Lisa Burley. See Kristina Taboulchanas Nov., 2003 Trip Report for background on the AGUILA Network and events leading up to the workshop.

- there were 20 participants from 10 different countries in Latin America, the workshop had 6 women and 14 men;
- most participants held senior positions within their organizations;
- participants were mostly from small NGOs where research was one of several activities; there were some participants from research institutes within government agencies (Cuba, Colombia and Mexico); from University research departments (Argentina and Venezuela); one sub-national network (Brazil); and one international NGO (Ecuador).

- over half of participants used three different fundraising methods and received funds from three different sources;
- less than half of participants had a person who formally dedicated time to fundraising;
- about a third of participants said their communication strategy had been successful;
- 40% said their current fundraising strategies were relatively successful.

Workshop Objectives and Flow of Content

General workshop objectives were defined as follows, with specific objectives for each day:

- analyze and diagnose organization from the perspective of resource mobilization and communication;
- understand key elements to elaborate a communication strategy;
- increase knowledge on fundraising techniques; and,
- develop a preliminary framework for a communication and fundraising strategy.

The flow of workshop content was as follows:

- key concepts on strategic planning at the organizational or programmatic level, communication strategy, and fundraising strategy. SWOT analysis was used here (Day 1, 2);
- introduction and practice with 6 different fundraising techniques (Day 2, 3 and 4);
- selection of an appropriate mix of fundraising techniques according to the organizational SWOT done earlier, and based on this, developing a fundraising strategy (Day 4).

Note that groups of three to five people worked on one participant's organization or project. Not all participants left with a fundraising strategy, however all had the opportunity to apply concepts to a practical setting.

Part I Workshop Content and Facilitation
Table 1 Qualitative Participant Evaluation of Workshop Content

Evaluation Question Based on Workshop Session and Daily Objectives	% of Participants Giving Ratings		
	High	Med.	Low
1 STRATEGIC PLANNING			
1.1] Degree to which concepts were clarified on: ∞ institutional or programmatic strategy; ∞ communication strategy; and, ∞ resource mobilization strategy.	70%	24%	6%
1.2] SWOT: extent to which understanding improved on: ∞ strengths of your organization;	72%	17%	5.5%
∞ weaknesses of your organization.	67%	17%	11%
1.3] Building an organizational image: extent to which understanding has improved of elements required	56%	38%	6%
1.4] Communication strategy: degree to which understanding improved of elements involved	43%	47%	5%
2 FUNDRAISING METHODS			
2.1] Private sector alliances; degree of usefulness of this method	65%	30%	5%
2.2] Marketing products and services; degree of usefulness of this method	55%	35%	10%
2.3] Direct marketing: ∞ to what extent did you receive new information	39%	39%	22%
∞ degree of usefulness of this method	61%	27%	24%
2.4] Large donors (individuals): usefulness of information	53%	30%	17%
2.5] Institutional donors: usefulness of information	50%	33%	11%
2.6] Special events: usefulness of information	48%	13%	13%
3 INTEGRATION OF FUNDRAISING METHODS TO STRATEGIC PLANNING			
3.1] Set of Methods and SWOT: degree to which these have improved your understanding of ∞ organizational strengths with fundraising	63%	25%	12%
∞ organizational weakness with fundraising	69%	19%	12%

1 Strategic Planning

1.1 Program, Communication and Fundraising Strategies

Participants gave high to medium ratings on the extent to which the training clarified concepts on program, communication and fundraising strategies. In terms of applying this improved understanding, 18 comments clustered around the following:

- to develop a clear communication and fundraising strategy;
- to further develop mission, vision and communication strategy in order to be more effective with fundraising. Comments included to improve, reformulate, redefine, refocus, clarify or simplify mission, vision and communication strategy;
- garnering internal organizational support for strategic plan and moving forward to implementation;
- increased motivation to fundraise; and,
- to be more strategic about how to position organization.

1.2 Organizational SWOT

Participants gave the highest rating to a clearer understanding of their organizational strengths and a slightly lower rating to better understanding its weaknesses. 15 comments on the application of this increased clarity included:

- its usefulness in feeding it back into further refining a realistic and feasible fundraising strategy linked to organizational goals;
- useful for institutional development plans; and,
- usefulness in knowing how to better articulate organizational strengths when soliciting funds for specific projects.

1.3 Organizational Image

Participants gave a medium rating on the extent to which they better comprehended the elements required to improve their organization's image. 15 comments on the main elements they found most applicable included:

- image is beyond commercial utility and inextricably linked to an organization's identity; in order to develop a solid image, more time needs to be invested in defining mission and vision;
- many comments were made on the importance of a good slogan and logo;
- some comments focused on the strategic positioning of the organization.

Text Box 1: Day 1 Satisfaction Check on Facilitation

The above material in sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 constituted the first day of the event, in addition to introductions, ice breakers, etc. Participants were the most pleased with course facilitation on the first day and ratings were consistently high.

1.4 Communication Strategy

Participants ratings were roughly split between medium to high on an improved understanding of the elements of a communication strategy. 19 comments indicated a diversity of relevant aspects, which can be roughly clustered as follows:

- back to basic planning; need to better plan mission and organizational objectives in order to determine messages, audiences and communications modalities;

- greater clarity; need to send clear messages to specific audiences;
- planning; the need to ensure that a communication strategy is feasible, ethical, has sufficient support, that the chosen modalities are appropriate;
- audience; must be specifically identified; the audience can be a group with whom an alliance is sought; and,
- management and evaluation; two participants commented on the need to deliberately manage the communication strategy and to assess the influence made on the target audience.

Participants commented on how they would apply their learning. 17 responses indicated the different levels of understanding and comfort with the material:

- two participants expressed the need to further assimilate ideas, or to identify audiences;
- most participants provided comments indicating that the session had further elevated their understanding and gave them tools for practical application; and,
- some participants gave specific comments for immediate application.

The consultant, IDRC and IPES planners were concerned with the group work part of this session. Unfortunately, group work instructions were not given as planned, and emphasis was on communication for project based fundraising. This blurred the difference between a communication strategy for an organization as a whole based on an integrated program or mission, and a fundraising strategy. Clarifying this difference was a recommendation of the needs assessment analysis. This point is further elaborated below in section 5.3.

2 Fundraising Methods

The facilitator introduced the concept of a donor pyramid. She made reference to the pyramid during the following 1.5 days while covering the various fundraising methods to situate them in their possible positions within the pyramid. This emphasis reinforced the pyramid concept, and appeared to assist participants to better understand the role the fundraising method under discussion might play to foster a diversified funding base.

2.1 Private Sector Alliances

About two-thirds of participants gave a high rating on the usefulness of the material covered in this session, and the remaining third gave a medium rating. 18 participants provided comments on the practical application of what they learned during the session:

- several participants provided focused comments on how to create or further build on private sector alliances;
- some participants were very motivated to begin working right away on building alliances;
- several others indicated the session had opened their minds to further exploring how to form alliances; and,
- one participant was already fully engaged with private sector, one was unclear as to what it all meant, and another was cautious about maintaining programmatic integrity.

2.2 Marketing Products and Services

Just over half the group gave a high rating to the degree of usefulness of this fundraising method. About a third gave a medium rating, and 10% a low rating. 18 Participants commented on how they would apply the method:

- several participants had clear ideas on how to implement the method, while several others indicated they would use what they learned to come up with ideas;
- this was new material for two participants, while for another, it was old hat;
- one participant did not understand the session, while another did not see its relevance to the NGO sector;
- two other participants said they needed further information, or further group discussion to better understand the method.

Text Box 2: Day 2 Satisfaction Check on Facilitation

Day 2 covered sections 1.4, 2.1 and 2.2. In terms of group satisfaction with facilitation, this day received more low ratings than any other day, although there was only one participant who gave low ratings for each facilitation criteria. There was a 10% decrease in the average of high ratings from the day before. The day was long, with a lot of material. There were comments, both verbal and written on the need to increase group discussion and draw upon participant experiences, and provide examples from urban agriculture and/or the development research sector.

2.3 Direct Marketing

Most participants indicated the session did not provide them with new information. However, most of them found the method useful. 13 comments regarding application were varied:

- about a third of the feedback indicated a focused and feasible application of the method such as using the method on a daily basis, creating a position that would involve direct marketing, use it to gain support for a reforestation project and applying it through website;
- another third contemplated ways of incorporating the method to increase effectiveness of campaigns, to assist with integrating a national strategy, to offer publications;
- for the remaining third, the session appeared to open their minds to the idea, however one person indicated they needed more time and information to better understand the method and its usefulness.

2.4 Large Donors (Individuals)

Over half of participants gave a high rating to the usefulness of the session, and close to third gave a medium rating. 10 comments on application focused on:

- the need to systematically apply the method;
- to focus the problem in a way the donor would understand;
- to re-adjust proposals according to donor parameters;
- to strengthen skills with face to face meetings with donors; and,
- one participant indicated they saw no application of the method for their organization.

2.5 Institutional Donors

This session received similar ratings as the previous one; with half of participants giving a high rating to the usefulness of the information presented and a third medium ratings. 7 people commented on issues regarding application:

- strengthen and orient strategies according to donor parameters, improve proposals, provide a summary of organization and its projects;
- one participant found the group exercise very useful, another suggested that a case-study would have improved the session, and other indicated that this method was already known.

During the earlier stages of workshop planning, both CFP and IPES preferred this session to have more time and greater depth. The facilitator was clear that her skill set was stronger in other areas. CFP provided a Spanish copy of training materials developed by ISNAR on proposal writing and fundraising for agricultural research projects, copies of the interactive CD-ROM “Writing for Change”, and PBDD prepared a donor landscape on urban agriculture in Latin America with donor funding parameters and contact names and addresses. Participant evaluations recognized these contributions and believed them to make a strong contribution to the session and workshop as a whole.

Text Box 3: Day 3 Check on Satisfaction with Facilitation

Day 3 covered sections 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5. The overall shift in satisfaction levels with facilitation pointed to little net change, with ratings decreasing in three areas, and increasing in three other areas. Nonetheless, increased ratings did not match the high levels given during the first day of the workshop.

2.6 Special Events

Almost half the group gave a high rating to this session, with 13% giving medium ratings and 13% giving low ratings. 13 participants provided comments on the application of the method:

- Most participants who found the method useful, understood a new potential for it.
``... this method is not only for exchanging experiences;
... this can be integrated as another strategy to not only attract specialists, but funds;
... we knew about this, but not how to use it;
... we knew about this in the context of congresses and encounters, but we will use this as part of our activities;
... this method has a new value, I now see it as part of a broader strategy.``
- some commented on how the method could be used to position their organization and establish new allies;
- 3 participants indicated the method had very little relevance to their organizations.

3 Integration of Fundraising Methods to Strategic Planning

This session requested participants to revisit the organizational SWOT analysis and consider an appropriate mix of fundraising techniques. Participants gave positive ratings

to the extent the session improved their understanding of organizational strengths, and slightly higher ratings to an increased understanding of its weaknesses. 11 participants provided comments:

- almost half of the comments indicated that the session was very effective;
 - ``...exercise enabled a more effective use of SWOT;
 - ... I can co-relate the reality of our needs with new possibilities;
 - ...the insight of the exercise prompted changes to the original SWOT priorities identified before the sessions on fundraising modalities;
 - ...this exercise enables me to clearly design next steps for my organization that integrate fundraising.``
- another half of the comments indicated the session enabled new thinking and perspective, implying that ideas would require further contemplation;
- one participant did not understand the exercise; another said it was relatively clear but there was too little time dedicated to it; a third said that although interesting, the exercise was intuitive.

4 Workshop Facilitation

Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of workshop facilitation was done for the first three days, on the fourth, qualitative assessment incorporated facilitation issues into other related topics, such as learning spaces, workshop content, and overall impression of facilitation.

In general, participants rated facilitation very favourably, the majority giving “very good” or high to “good” or medium ratings. There was a general downward trend in ratings as the workshop progressed. Those who were most critical were from IDRC (Kristina Taboulchanas and Lisa Burley) and IPES (the administering organization, Jorge Price ED and Mario Gonzalo, Network Coordinator).

For the first three days participants were asked to assess facilitation according to six criteria. Results show that facilitator strengths varied each day among the criteria. Taking an average of the daily ranking of criteria provides an idea of what participants perceived to be, in relative terms, the strongest and weakest aspects of facilitation. They are listed here in descending order and synthesize qualitative comments.

Table 2 Quantitative Participant Evaluation of Workshop Facilitation

Evaluation Questions on Facilitation (listed in descending order according to averaged ranking)	Percentage of Participants Providing Rating								
	Day One			Day Two			Day Three		
	High	Med	Low	High	Med	Low	High	Med	Low
1] Receptivity to suggestions and doubts	100%			85%	10%	5%	76%	24%	
2] Ability to foment group participation	94%	6%		81%	14%	5%	73%	27%	
3] Ability to foment group participation such that it adds value to presented material	71%	29%		80%	15%	5%	83%	17%	
4] Clarity and order in facilitating the process of knowledge building	88%	12%		85%	10%	5%	71%	24%	5%
5] Expository ability	82%	18%		71%	24%	5%	78%	22%	
6] Quality of information provided	88%	12%		60%	35%	5%	73%	24%	5%

4.1 Receptivity to suggestions and doubts

All participants rated this “very good” on day one, although this declined on day two it still ranked first, but fell to third place on day three.

4.2 Ability to foment group participation

Participants ranked this second on days one and two, and fourth on day three. IDRC and IPES staff along with one participant flagged the need to make sessions more dynamic on day one, whereas another participant was content with the anecdotal style of the facilitator.

4.3 Ability to foment group participation such that it adds value to presented material

While ratings did not change significantly, there was considerable variance in ranking; from fifth place on day one to first place on day three. Again IDRC staff were concerned here, particularly with the lack of drawing out participant experiences with given fundraising methods. IPES and two participants were also concerned with the lack of experience sharing and examples drawing on urban agriculture. One participant found the group sessions were not long enough to allow for meaningful discussion.

4.4 Clarity and order in facilitating the process of knowledge building

This criteria showed the greatest day-to-day rank variance, first place on day two, and fifth place on day three.

4.5 Expository ability

These were ranked in fourth place on days one and two, and up to second place on day three. Corridor discussions provided feedback on the consultant's needs for more agility in moving from pragmatic to theoretical concepts.

4.6 Quality of information provided

This was ranked lowest, and also received the lowest rating on day two. The AGUILA network coordinator had requested material to circulate to participants before the workshop. Different participants mentioned the lack of documentation and subject bibliography on each day. Participants were eager to learn more of resource mobilization and wanted references and author names. The facilitator's preference was to provide information at the moment or after a session, arguing that engaging participants in the group setting was more effective than providing reading they would do individually. Information provided was in the form of loose-leaf handouts, one participant suggested a daily synthesis of this material.

Part II Comparing Front End Planning with Workshop Delivery

5 Lessons Learned

5.1 Observations on Planning Process

Although there was a logical flow among the components of the workshop, it was by no means easy to achieve. There was resistance from the consultant to the consultative planning process of IDRC and our insistence on customizing the workshop to participant needs, defining clear objectives, and using evaluation as a means to further enrich learning. In her thirteen years of experience. We were her first client who desired a high level of involvement.

In addition, the planning process was extremely rushed. Perhaps due to her inexperience of working in a team fashion with workshop design, the consultant often missed deadlines which created workload bottlenecks for other planners. Although logistical planning was outsourced, there was still very little time to adjust workshop layout to the needs assessment analysis. All planning members worked long hours to ensure these linkages. Generally, planners kept up with the demanding pace, however there were times when it became overwhelming. This process left IDRC and IPES planners concerned

with the success of the workshop. On the most part, the consultant delivered a very engaging event marked by a diversity of presentation modalities, anecdotes and illustrative examples.

All logistical planning was done by IPES. They ensured all participants had airline tickets and perdiems. They chose a very appropriate venue, and organized evening entertainment. Their efforts and results with logistics were both outstanding. This allowed more time for me to remain engaged with workshop design and evaluation.

5.2 Fundraising Training for a Network

The workshop was designed to have several sessions of small group work. Group membership would change with each session for various pedagogical reasons, however it was decided that every session would have a fixed group dedicated to AGUILA network issues. The group had two constant participants, the Coordinator, Mario Gonzalo, and CFP Officer, Kristina Taboulchanas, in addition to two or three floating spots for other network members. Network issues were also discussed at coffee breaks, and outside the workshop agenda. Immediately following the workshop, CFP called a meeting with all participants to discuss network issues. In several ways, the workshop and the role played by the CFP officer provided an opportunity to strengthen the AGUILA network.

The parameters that define a network differ from those of an NGO, research institute or government agency, which were the kinds of organizations to which most participants were affiliated. These defining parameters, and other factors, play a decisive role in the elaboration of a fundraising strategy, and the choice of fundraising techniques. Given this, I would recommend bringing together various different network coordinators for training, rather than coordinators with their network members. This would allow for greater exchange on the specific characteristics of networks and their implications for resource mobilization.

There was a subtle tension between network members as individual organizations with self interests, and the network itself as a representing the common interest of all workshop participants (at least theoretically). While there may be degrees of this tension regardless of circumstances, the unclear purpose, objectives and future trajectory of AGUILA perhaps played the dual role of exacerbating this tension, yet also of inspiring members to bring greater focus to the network, and collaborate to broaden its funding sources. It is important to note that the workshop was supported by CFP in response to their decision to reduce programming in LAC (for details see K. Taboulchanas Nov., 2003 TR).

5.3 Muddled Attempts to Clarify Communication

The results of the needs assessment, conducted among all participants before the workshop, were analyzed by the consultant who put forward several recommendations for workshop design and content to consider. Four of the six recommendations focussed on communication issues: reinforce the role of communication;

- reinforce the role of communication;

- clarify different communication styles and modalities according to target audience;
- reinforce the need for clear communication objectives that are coherent and measurable;
- differentiate fundraising objectives from communication objectives.

Although the design and flow of the workshop incorporated these recommendations, flawed instructions in the corresponding breakout session seemed to reinforce rather than clarify the melding together of fundraising and communication objectives, roles and modalities. Some participants developed a communication strategy specifically for raising funds for a project. The intention however was to pitch the communication strategy at the organizational level, which enables the identification of additional audiences that can be drawn upon to mobilize resources for the organization as a whole, which can then be used for specific projects. The implications of this lost opportunity were manifested at various points in the workshop, evidenced by questions and directions taken by some small group work sessions.

5.4 Persistent Focus at Project Level and on Project Proposal

Perhaps the most obvious indicator of the lack of clarity on communication strategy at the organizational level, was a persistent focus, not by all, but by a large portion of participants on the project and institutional donor. While this is not indicative of failure, the workshop was not able to convincingly introduce new ideas that would diversify funding sources and fundraising techniques, and therefore assist LAC partners at a time when institutional donors are leaving the region.

5.5 Planners' Expectations

5.5.1 Workshop or Course/Seminar?

The workshop title was misleading; the event was much more like a course or seminar. It presented a considerable amount of material and for the most part, group work was designed for participants to become familiar with material, but not to actually work with it. Although this approach has its merits, this was not clear to IDRC and IPES planners, who had expectations for considerably more participation, and participation conducive to working with workshop content. Nonetheless, participants themselves were highly satisfied with the event.

5.5.2 Case Study

Selected participants were required to submit a research case study and elaborate on fundraising aspects. There was very little elaboration. Participants were disgruntled by the task given the lack of time at the workshop to discuss cases. This issue I believe was due to the fact that the event itself was planned by a diverse group. Half the group did not have experience with fundraising training, and the consultant was not at all familiar with research organizations. This issue however was the only obvious manifestation of the small disconnect among those involved with planning.

5.6 Learning Spaces

The workshop event employed presentations, group work, plenary discussions and informal gatherings such as meal and evening socializing. Participants were asked to comment on which spaces were more conducive to learning. Feedback was received from 15 people, of those whom directly addressed the question, responses indicated:

- Most responses underlined the importance of using all spaces,
... to achieve balance among the different learning spaces;
... to integrate the different kinds of learning spaces in well thought out workshop design;
... each space plays a different role, for example the facilitator systematizes and crystallizes the theme in question and group work discusses the problematique;
- A group of people favoured group work, some indicated all techniques were useful and that group work was a highlight, while others expressed a clear preference.
- One participant (experienced in fundraising) explained the value of informal spaces which she herself organized for continued discussions.
- One response discussed the useful aspects of all the learning spaces: review and refreshers; clear steps; guidelines; to see that we share common problems and we all have potential
- Some participants suggested that information for workshop sessions should be given out beforehand; the facilitator however, explained that the order in which information was provided was linked to the learning process.